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ITALY

CSR

HUNGARY

The Thirty-First MILAN Fair.

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EVAL. COMMENT: Hungary regularly attends the MILAN Fair. In 1953, the Hungarian Envoy in ROME, KALLO Ivan, headed the Hungarian delegation at the opening ceremony. The quality of the articles exhibited at the Fair reflects the decreasing standards of Hungarian Industry, particularly for consumer goods.

EVAL. COMMENT: (Czechoslovakia) It is interesting to note that CSR participation in the MILAN Fair was not mentioned in the available CSR press. The decline of consumer goods quality is confirmed here; however, it seems that CSR cut glass products, although far from the prewar standard, have until now not been challenged by serious competition on the world market. Promising progress is being made by the German manufacturers.

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On Sunday, 11 April 1953, the Thirty-First MILAN Trade and Industrial Fair was opened by Luigi EINAUDI, President of the Republic of Italy. The participating nations, including Hungary and Czechoslovakia, are represented, and more than 250 new products not previously exhibited to the public may be seen.

Opening day was fair and sunshiny, and a great show was made by the huge visitors' stand thronged with personalities from all the participating countries and some others, present to hear Mr. EINAUDI give his opening discourse.

The President arrived in MILAN from ROME at 0910 and proceeded to the fair grounds in a huge motorcade. At the entrance to the Fair he was met by representative

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forces of the Army, the Carabinieri, the Finance Guards and the Fire Corps. In front of the speakers' stand was the Band of the Public Security, and officers of the Bersaglieri, as color guard.

President EINAUDI, saluting the public and the Fair Officials, applauded the fine efforts of the officials of the Fair, which is an autonomous organization sponsored by the Commune of MILANO. He praised all the exhibitors and the contribution they have made to the program of Man's well-being and to bettering the lot of all people.

The President and his party then spent the rest of the day visiting the various exhibits.

In the great Palace of the Nations, where general exhibits are held, the show was a good one. Of the countries of Eastern Europe, this year only Hungary and Czechoslovakia are represented. In the past years, in addition to them, there have appeared the Soviet Union (in 1951 for the first and last time,) Poland and Rumania. Bulgaria was supposed to be represented this year, and had all its exhibits in MILAN ready, and space rented. However, at the last minute, because of diplomatic tension existing between Bulgaria and Italy, Bulgaria cancelled her appearance. (The full story of this is included in a separate report.)

Noteworthy in the Palace of the Nations was the fact that this year all the Scandinavian countries, Norway, Denmark and Sweden, have a common exhibit, showing the community of interests and mutual interrelationship between these three countries. Among the most colorful exhibits were those from Indo-China and its separate units, including Cambodia, and Viet Nam, Turkey, Greece, Guatemala, Yugoslavia, Holland, Canada, France, Belgium, and others. The French exhibit this year includes a magnificent display of the finest in modern typographical and illustrative art.

The commercial and industrial exhibits are an amazing spectacle indeed. Almost any product on the world market in the way of finished product is to

be found here. Many new developments and novelties in the fields of plastics are especially noticeable. Building materials in entirely new plastics open new horizons. The most striking and successful private exhibit is that of a well-known tooth-paste, which, on a large lot perfectly reproducing a Mexican desert scene, complete with sleeping peon (alive,) shows a space ship, ready to take off for Mars. The crew is still moving about, dressed in their space suits of shining metal and wearing their transparent helmets and oxygen-tanks. After a time they enter the ship, and the rockets begin to hiss and scream. (But the rocket does not actually take off. We'll have to wait for a future fair to see that.)

What a pity that our listeners in the countries behind the Iron Curtain cannot see all the new and fascinating things that this capitalist western world is developing new each year.

Turning to the two representatives of Eastern Europe, we feel a sense of profound pity, almost of shame. The Hungarian exhibit shows a complete bathroom, for example - evidently the latest and most up-to-date now made in that country. The style was crude and the enamelling poorly done, in some places being so thin that after a couple of cleanings, the bare terra cotta would come forth. The tub was miserable and without sides, being set in a wooden frame, like those our grandmothers used to have. One could sincerely admire the fine handicrafts and embroidered blouses of traditional Hungarian artisanship. And we could thank the strength of those people who have been able to keep at least that much of their heritage. For the rest, however, little good can be said. A few poor, shoddy scientific instruments were shown, some old china-ware (obviously not for sale but there for its decorative value.) Textiles - of designs and weaves similar to those found in the poorest and cheapest of Italian country pedlars' stocks. Sausages, preserved meats, salamis - these we saw through the glass and could not judge as to quality. In packaging, however, they are inferior to such things as commonly found on the Italian market of Italian production. Our impressions of

the Hungarian exhibit were of tired, overworked people, who no longer have hopes, taste, or even desire to make a good show. Certainly, there was to be seen no sign of the taste and fine sense of line and of design that we in the West have always considered the Hallmark of all that which is Hungarian.

Turning to the Czechoslovak exhibit, we felt much the same as we did when visiting the Hungarian. At the entrance, where in the past has appeared the bust of GOTTWALD, there is now a bust of ZAPOTOCKY, sitting on a high pedestal, with a background of red curtains. We got quietly past this monument (for it looks far more like a tombstone than a monument honoring a living man,) wondering how long that face will continue to be honored. The first thing we see are samples of all sorts of coal and lignite, as well as by-products of coal-distillation, including dyes, tars, oils, etc. We then come to a case full of paints and pigments, and then to porcelain insulators and other industrial ceramics. Following this are samples of scientific and industrial glass-ware, and then a case showing a few microscopes and other optical and scientific apparatus. There were a couple of cheap-looking cameras, and two enlargers - one for 35 mm negatives, and the other - vertical - for large studio enlargements. Then there were rubbergoods, toys and notions, including braids, trimmings, pins, needles, brass fasteners and buckles, etc. Off to one side is a large glass case filled with books and prints. I can only say that, contrasting these articles with the magnificent examples of fine printing and book-making in the French exhibit below, it would have been better for the Czech exhibitors to have left these things at home. Stuck away behind some folios, there was a small edition of the famous Goya etchings of the "Horrors of War." We wondered how that got there, and if its presence was a part of the present MOSCOW Peace Line or not. It is the first time we have ever seen these works of GOYA in the middle of Communist publications. It gave us room for much speculation. I would have liked to have seen the book at first hand and been able to read the captions. But when I asked to see it, I was politely told that the books could not be handled.

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I had been anxious to see the exhibits of Bohemian crystal ware, as at past fairs this has been a highlight for me. Two years ago the Czechs had by far the best exhibits at the fair, being especially ahead of all the rest in fine glass and art work in crystal. But this year I looked in vain. All that was new, fresh, different, and forward-looking, which had so characterized the Czech glass exhibited in past years, was missing. It seemed to have been epurated, for some reason. Instead, there was poor looking china-ware, glass sets - tea sets, liqueur sets, etc., in colored - usually muddy brown - glass, with cheap designs, such as one often finds in the cheapest notions stores in poor quarters of provincial towns. True, there was a small collection of cut-glass crystal in the traditional shapes and forms. But the edges were uneven, and there were many bubbles in the glass. What was left was about on the same level as some Soviet stuff I saw in MILAN two years back - and which had made such a bad showing that the Russians have not dared again send exhibits to MILAN. My heart was very heavy, as I realized that here, too, at last, the long Russian hand has stretched out and killed something that was lovely and unique. Would it ever return? I saw some beautiful modern glass and crystal ware in the Scandinavian exhibit and in the Belgian - but not in the Czech room. Have the great Bohemian artists in glass all been epurated, too?

As in past years, the Czechs also had on exhibit some motorcycles and bicycles. I could not judge their quality from merely looking at them. But contrasting their external appearance with those from other countries - especially Italy, Germany and Great Britain - I could not help noting that in painting, finishing, etc., the Czech cycles were in outward appearance greatly inferior to the others.

Also as usual, the Czechs exhibited many musical instruments - brass, reeds, pianos and organs, both electric and melodions. So far as external appearance is concerned, these appeared to be up to standard. I heard several of the pianos played, and to judge by their tones they appeared to be adequate, but

nothing special. There was one piano - a ROSEL Baby Grand - in Louis XIV style. I had spent two hours in the Czech room, carefully looking at everything there, and each moment was more difficult than the last, as I saw more forcibly the incredible deterioration in quality, design, and finish of those Czech products which in the past I have so much admired. When I asked as to prices, I was told simply that goods are not sold in small quantities, and that if I were a genuine businessman, seriously interested in Czech products, I must address myself to the Commercial Attaché in ROME. As I left the Fair Grounds, I kept thinking over what I had seen, and lamenting something that was dead. The inevitable was becoming very much apparent in the Czech products shown to the public. Loss of political and spiritual liberty was destroying the work of these men who had once been the finest craftsmen in Europe, and whose art had been famous for centuries. For machines, too, as well as paintings, statues and crystal-ware can be works of art, and they can be cheap and shoddy products of slave labor, of the sweat-shop, of fear and distress without hope, without inspiration. Was there ever a power more destructive of all that is fresh, pure, good, sweet, creative, alive and human, than is bolshevism?

End.